

Michael Deserves His Own Birthday

Ella Paul

Eighty-one days ago,
in the white light of Target,
leaning on a red cart with square holes,
I quietly met Mike.
His teeth were white and square and neat and unobtrusive,
like the sound of his voice.
Later, we did laundry, separating his whites and his colors
into the square, metal machines.
We sat in the hallway while his clothes spun.
He told me he has a twin sister,
and the winter solstice is always split with her,
a reminder of their tandem entry into the world.
So this year, I'm going to make him a square, white cake,
ornamented with nineteen neatly-placed candles,
and only his name
so he doesn't have to share.